

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this patent application. Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify subject matter recited in that claim. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the Amendment merely clarifies the subject matter already recited in claim 1; (c) do not add any claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for an appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments were necessary and were not earlier presented as their response to arguments raised in the Final Rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 9, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Stromberg et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,674,671, in view of what the Examiner characterizes as admitted prior art. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being patentable over Matsuo et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,190,830, in view of what the Examiner characterizes as admitted prior art. Claims 1, 3, 4, and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Richardson, U.S. Patent No. 5,203,975, in view of what the Examiner characterizes as admitted prior art. Additionally, claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Stromberg et al. in view of what the Examiner characterizes as admitted prior art, and further in view of either Matsuo et al. or Richardson et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

As Applicants have previously explained, the present invention is drawn to a process for coating three-dimensional substrates. The claimed invention provides a process that enables the user to avoid the use of spray application of coating compositions. In a method according to the invention, a first primer layer and a second layer are applied without spray application (e.g., electrophoretically) and the final top coat is applied in form of a plastic film, after stoving the first and second layers. The plastic film is part of the total multi-layer coating and provides protection for the layers beneath.

As was stated previously, none of the cited references, either alone or in any proper combination, disclose a method for preparing a multi-layer coating using an unpigmented or pigmented plastic film as the last layer of the coating composition. The Examiner maintains that the use of such a plastic film is disclosed in the instant specification at page 1, lines 25-34, and alleges that this disclosure constitutes prior art. However, as is made clear from that portion of the specification, the disclosed plastic film is not part of the coating composition, as it "may subsequently be removed" and is merely used for cosmetic reasons (i.e., to temporarily provide a taxicab with a designated pigment such that that pigment may be easily removed later).

In paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Applicants are arguing limitations that are not present in the claims. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants submit that the nature and position of the plastic film in the claimed coating composition is clearly recited in the last two lines of the original claim 1. However, in an effort to expedite the prosecution of this case, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that "a plastic film is applied as a third coating layer of the protective indicative laminar structure," (emphasis added). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned to discuss the same.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached Appendix is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made"**.

Respectfully submitted,

PILLSBURY WINTHROP LLP

By 

Irina S. Zemel
Reg. No. 43,402
Tel: (703) 905-2227
Fax: (703) 905-2500

ISZ/AJM:mjb

1600 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, Virginia 22102
(703) 905-2000

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A process for the production of a three-dimensional substrate provided with a protective and decorative laminar structure, characterised in that a primer layer of a coating composition (I) which is electrically conductive in the stoved state is applied without spraying onto an electrically conductive substrate and stoved, whereupon a substrate not yet in the desired three-dimensional shape is shaped, whereupon a second coating layer of an electrophoretically depositable coating composition (II) is electrophoretically deposited and stoved and whereupon a plastic film is applied as a third coating layer of the protective and decorative laminar structure.